

# Emergency Support Function #4 – Firefighting Annex

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## ESF Coordinator:

Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

## Primary Agency:

Department of Agriculture/Forest Service

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## Support Agencies:

Department of Commerce  
Department of Defense  
Department of Homeland Security  
Department of the Interior  
Environmental Protection Agency

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## Introduction

### Purpose

Emergency Support Function (ESF) #4 – Firefighting enables the detection and suppression of wildland, rural, and urban fires resulting from, or occurring coincidentally with, an Incident of National Significance.

### Scope

ESF #4 manages and coordinates firefighting activities, including the detection and suppression of fires on Federal lands, and provides personnel, equipment, and supplies in support of State, local, and tribal agencies involved in rural and urban firefighting operations.

### Policies

- Priority is given to public and firefighter safety and protecting property, in that order.
- Processes and procedures established by the National Wildland Coordinating Group (NWCG) in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide are followed in responding

to Incidents of National Significance under the National Response Plan (NRP).

- National support is accomplished through the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, ID.
- Coordination with, and support of, State and local fire suppression organizations is accomplished through the State Forester, in cooperation with the State Fire Marshal, State emergency management agency, or other appropriate State agency and/or tribal fire suppression organizations operating under the National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS).
- The coordinator for ESF #4 – Firefighting is the Department of Agriculture (USDA)/Forest Service, at the headquarters level. For operations that occur in the State of Alaska, operational lead for firefighting response is the Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management (DOI/BLM).

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## Concept of Operations

### General

- ESF #4 manages and coordinates Federal firefighting activities. This function is accomplished by mobilizing firefighting resources in support of State, local, and tribal wildland, rural, and urban firefighting agencies.

ESF #4 uses established firefighting and support organizations, processes, and procedures outlined in the National Mobilization Guide. Responsibility for situation assessment and determination of resource needs lies primarily with the local incident commander.

- Requests for firefighting assistance and resources are transmitted from the Joint Field Office (JFO) ESF #4 representative to the appropriate Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC). For resources beyond those available within the geographic area, the requests are sent to the NICC in Boise, ID, by the Geographical Area Coordinator. The NICC contacts the ESF #4 coordinator in the event of national-level shortages or unavailability of needed resources.
- Resolution of shortages is pursued by the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) and, when necessary, by the Interagency Incident Management Group (IIMG). Actual firefighting operations are managed under the ICS. Situation and damage assessment information is transmitted through established fire suppression channels and directly between the headquarters-level and regional-level functions according to NIMS procedures.

**Organization:** ESF #4 has a parallel structure at the national and regional levels.

#### **Headquarters-Level Response Support Structure**

- The USDA Homeland Security Office represents the USDA/Forest Service on the IIMG.
- The ESF #4 coordinator operates under the direction of the Assistant Director for Planning, Fire, and Aviation Management, Forest Service. Assistance is provided as necessary by the Forest Service and DOI Fire Directors at the NIFC.
- The Forest Service Disaster and Emergency Operation Branch Chief serves as the ESF #4 coordinator. The ESF #4 coordinator or representative reports to and is a member of the NRCC, when activated. This position is the link to the National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at Forest Service Headquarters.
- The ESF #4 coordinator, through the NRCC, provides subject-matter expertise to the IIMG and, based on recommended Department of Homeland Security requirements, may be operational on a 24-hour basis. Supporting

agencies' representatives are available by telephone or pager on a 24-hour basis, when necessary.

- National logistics support and mobilization of resources are provided by the NICC.

#### **Regional-Level Response Structure**

- Federal firefighting response support is coordinated by the regional/area ESF #4 coordinator provided by the Forest Service regional/area office. The regional ESF #4 coordinator is responsible for establishing and maintaining coordination with the national ESF #4 coordinator, regional support agencies, and the JFO. Regional firefighting response and logistics support is provided by GACCs and the NICC in accordance with established Mobilization Guides. Supporting agencies have representatives available by telephone or pager on a 24-hour basis for the duration, as necessary.

#### **Notification**

Upon notification of a potential or actual event requiring ESF #4 response, the National ESF #4 coordinator notifies the Regional/Area Fire Coordinators, the NICC, and the DOI Departmental Emergency Coordinator.

#### **Actions**

##### **Pre-Incident**

- Prevention: Policies, procedures, and guidelines for wildland fires are established in the National Interagency Fire Prevention Plan.
- Preparedness: National preparedness planning levels for wildland fire suppression are established by the NWCG in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide.

##### **Incident**

- Initial Response Actions: The national ESF #4 coordinator or representative:
  - Reports to the NRCC within 2 hours of notification;

- Establishes communication links with support agencies, the USDA Emergency Operations Center, the National Director for Fire and Aviation Management at Forest Service Headquarters, and Forest Service Assistant Director–Operations at the NIFC;
- Establishes communication links with the Regional/Area Fire Coordinators; and
- Obtains an initial fire situation and damage assessment through established intelligence procedures.
- Coordinates incident resource needs, and determines and resolves, as necessary, issues regarding resource shortages and resource ordering issues, interagency conflicts, and policy matters referred by the IIMG;
- Maintains close coordination through the NRCC with the IIMG, Regional Response Coordination Center, support agencies, NICC, JFO, and Incident Command Post; and
- Maintains a complete log of actions taken, resource orders, records, and reports.

#### **Post-Incident**

- Continuing Response Actions: The national ESF #4 coordinator or representative:
  - Obtains, maintains, and provides incident situation and damage assessment information through established procedures;

**Recovery:** Resource rehabilitation and demobilization policies and procedures are established in the National Interagency Mobilization Guide and Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook.

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### **Responsibilities**

#### **ESF Coordinator/Primary Agency: USDA/Forest Service**

- Provides qualified representatives to serve as national ESF #4 coordinator, regional/area ESF coordinator, and ESF coordinator at the JFO.
- Requests assistance from supporting agencies as necessary to accomplish ESF #4 responsibilities.
- Provides logistics support through the GACC and/or NICC for mobilizing resources for firefighting.
- Assumes full responsibility for suppression of wildfires burning on national forest system lands and joins in a unified command with the local jurisdiction on incidents threatening national forest system lands.
- Provides and coordinates firefighting assistance to other Federal land management, State forestry, and local fire organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the NRP.
- Arranges for direct liaison with fire chiefs in the designated area to coordinate requests for firefighting assistance in structural or industrial fire protection operations.
- Provides information to the Planning Section at the incident and to the JFO as assessments of fire-caused damages are obtained.

## Support Agencies

Agency	Functions
<b>Department of Commerce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides fire/weather forecasting as needed from the NIFC in Boise, ID, or from a nearby National Weather Service Forecast Office under the terms of existing interagency agreements.</li> <li>▪ Provides urban and industrial hazard analysis support through the Building and Fire Research Laboratory of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.</li> <li>▪ Provides fire/weather support under the terms of the National Agreement for Meteorological Services in Support of Agencies with Land Management and Fire Protection Responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Provides forecasts of the dispersion of smoke in support of planning and response activities.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Defense (DOD)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assumes full responsibility for firefighting activities on DOD installations.</li> <li>▪ Supports firefighting operations on nonmilitary lands with personnel, equipment, and supplies under the terms of the existing interagency agreement, including the arrangement of liaisons as required.</li> <li>▪ U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Provides contracting services through ESF #3 to urban and rural firefighting forces to obtain heavy equipment and/or demolition services as needed to suppress incident-related fires.</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>	<b>Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate/Federal Emergency Management Agency/U.S. Fire Administration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides subject-matter experts/expertise regarding structural/urban/suburban fire and fire-related activities.</li> <li>▪ Maintains a representative at the NIFC to assist with national coordination.</li> </ul>
	<b>U.S. Coast Guard</b> Provides support for marine firefighting incidents.
<b>Department of the Interior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assumes full responsibility for fighting wildfires burning on lands within its jurisdiction.</li> <li>▪ Assists the Forest Service in managing and coordinating firefighting operations.</li> <li>▪ Provides firefighting assistance to other Federal land management organizations as requested under the terms of existing agreements and the NRP.</li> </ul>

Agency	Functions
<b>Environmental Protection Agency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provides technical assistance and advice in the event of fires involving hazardous materials.</li> <li>▪ Provides assistance in identifying an uncontaminated water source for firefighting.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Organizations</b>	<p>State forestry organizations in most States are responsible for wildland firefighting on non-Federal lands. States may assist other States in firefighting operations and may assist Federal agencies through agreements. In addition, resources may be provided through Emergency Management Assistance Compact. Private-sector resources are mobilized through standard contract procedures.</p>